

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DRAFT

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name St. John's Episcopal Church

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 20 E. Cherry Street

city or town Albion

state Illinois

code IL

county Edwards

code 047

zip code 62806

☐

not for publication

☐

vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility (church)

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RELIGION: Religious facility (church)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID-19th CENTURY: Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: Sandstone

walls: BRICK

WOOD: Weatherboarding

roof: METAL: Steel

other: GLASS

WOOD

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

St. John's Episcopal Church, located in Albion, Illinois, was constructed in 1842 and extensively remodeled in 1890 – 1891. The church is set on a hilltop one block from the town square on a small lot donated by town founder George Flower. The street is residential. An alley borders the east, a lot owned by a local lumber yard abuts to the north, and a tree line marks the west boundary. The brick one-and-one-half story structure is about 26 by 40 plus the 15 by 15 attached vestry room, with a two-and-one-half story bell tower. The main portion is a simple rectangular nave with a smaller square chancel, with an open gable roof. A small sacristy or vestments room was added to the northeast side. The main entrance is through the second bell tower/narthex on the southwest corner. A small, modern parish hall is attached (only by a doorway through an old closet) on the west side. A non-contributing metal storage shed stands in the west side yard.

Narrative Description

The church, which is set back from the street, is accessed from the sidewalk by concrete steps with a cast iron railing. The foundation is irregular sandstone quarried from the area and roughly mortared. It is laid in a rectangle (26 by 40), which indents to a one-story sacristy (15 by 15) on the north end. The foundation is positioned with the entrance to the south, the vestry end to the north, and the nave walls on the east and west. The walls are bricks fired from local clay. They are laid in a six-inch English style of five rows of stretchers between rows of headers with a few lighter-colored bricks interspersed. The east and west walls are about 20' high; there are no buttresses or quoins.

The south wall gable peaks at about thirty feet and has a minimal and unadorned verge board and enclosed rafters. The eaves have been enclosed with artificial siding. A round window opening with a louver inset is beneath the gable's peak, and three lancet windows with frosted chicken wire glass panels fill the south wall. A substantial bell tower with the vestibule/narthex in its base is located on the southwest corner of the front façade. Atop the spire is a "pattee" cross. The tower has a standing seam metal roof, with gabled louver windows on each elevation. On each elevation of the tower's second story is a double-sash, lancet-arched window.

A large lancet arch window with tracery and frosted glazing is on the first floor of the west wall of the bell tower. Four concrete steps with a cast iron railing lead to the gabled entry located on the south side of the bell tower. The partially enclosed entry (approximately 3 by 6) has a standing seam metal roof and clapboard siding, with wood shingles beneath the gable. The wide band of trim beneath the gable and the entablature form a triangular pediment, "supported" by Doric pilasters. The entryway has a Gothic arch with drip molding. The front doors are walnut, each with three horizontal inset panels over two vertical ones. The east panel door has a long metal key plate and knob. A rectangular fanlight with three lights is above the entrance. The east and west exterior walls each have five double-hung (15 over 15) windows with frosted glazes. Atop each is a lancet arch of 10 pointed glazes in tracery molding. These nine large windows are the dominate feature of the east and west walls. A parish hall was added onto the back of the bell tower. The addition has a gabled standing seam metal roof and a concrete block foundation. The south elevation is brick with no openings and the other three are clad with aluminum siding. The handicapped accessible entrance and ramp are located on the north elevation. There are two windows on both the east and west elevations and one on the north elevation.

The chancel is located on the north elevation. The roof pitch is slightly steeper than that of the nave's. Two lancet windows are on the west wall, three on the north wall, and one on the east wall. The sacristy, a small one story brick addition with a hipped roof, is located at the juncture of the nave and the chancel, on the northeast side of the church. The sacristy has an exterior door on its north elevation.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

Interior

The interior of the historic church has white plaster over brick walls. Dark wainscot runs along each wall from the floor to the sills. All of the windows in the narthex, nave, and chancel are lancet with dark stained wood. The vestibule and nave are lit by Gothic style, pendant light fixtures. The narthex, located in the southwest corner of the church is a small area with a closet housing the furnace on the north wall and a door leading to the new parish hall on the northwest corner. The west wall has a lancet colored glass window with tracery in the top. The east wall has a Gothic arched opening with 28 pointed glazes in the tracery molding. The nave is accessed through this opening.

The nave and the chancel have vaulted wood paneled ceilings supported by king post trusses. A reinforced brick lancet arch with compound pillars and a worked keystone separates the nave from the chapel. The nave has seven rows of oak pews on either side of a central aisle. The south wall of the nave has three narrow lancet windows; the center window being taller than the other two. The old reed organ is located in the southeast corner behind the new organ. The baptismal font is to the north of the vestibule entrance behind a small wooden railing. The large windows along the east and west walls of the nave are set in deep (about eight inch) wooden frames with wooden sills.

The chancel is on a raised platform and is divided from the transept by a wood railing with turned spindles and newel posts. There are three leaded (?) glass lancet windows on the north wall, and clear glazed lancet windows on the east and west walls; two on the west and one on the east. The three on the north wall have brick headers. The six-paneled wood door to the sacristy is just behind the brick arch on the east side of the chancel. The sacristy is a small one story addition where the vestment chest is stored. The room has a small sink in the southeast corner, a lancet window on the south wall, and a paneled door with glazing.

The parish hall is a non-historic small addition that is accessed through the narthex. It has a restroom and a kitchenette. The hall has an exterior door on the north wall.

Since the historical period of significance ended in 1891, there have been some changes. At some unrecorded time, the rose window in the south gable was replaced with a wooden insert and louver. Since the 1842 cornerstone was apparently a box inserted in the brickwork, there was no visible plaque. "Engraved cornerstones had not come into usage." In 1936 a donation paid for a "neatly engraved name stone" placed below the center lancet window in the south wall, countersunk into the "aged brick wall." After a lean period, the church was cleaned and updated in the late 1950s: re-wiring, new church lights, new vestment chest, new furnace, new shingles, guttering, interior painting, pew refinishing. A bequest from the Hutchins family in 1985 allowed the congregation to build a parish hall in the west yard, attaching it to the vestibule through an old closet. After 143 years, the church building had its first restroom facility. In 1991, the nave floor was "sinking in places and becoming very uneven." Concrete pads were poured below the floor and new beams installed the length of the church on each side and the floor reinstalled. In 1999 parishioners donated funds to replace the clear glass in the three north lancet windows in the chancel with stained glass.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☒ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1842-1891

Significant Dates

1842, 1891

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Not known

Period of Significance (justification)

This span begins with the construction of the parish church and extends through the extensive remodeling in 1890-91. The period also falls within accepted time period for Gothic Revival architecture of which it is an ecclesiastical example (Blumenson: 1830-1860; McAlester & McAlester: 1840-1880).

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

St. John's Episcopal Church meets Criterion Consideration A, deriving its primary importance from its Gothic Revival architectural style and not for its religious association.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

St. John's Episcopal Church in Albion, Illinois, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, as a good local example of Gothic Revival architecture. The church's original Gothic Revival characteristics are representative of parishes incorporating the English ecclesiastical architecture common in Episcopal rural churches. This is a "Prairie" Gothic Revival that uses identifiable Gothic elements in a simplified, unadorned fashion. The significant original features are the nine pointed arches of the large nave windows (including the remaining tracery in the lancet arches), the large lancet arch from over the entrance doors with tracery and glazes, the walnut panel double doors, the small pointed-arch window that was once in the south gable, the locally-fired brick, the wainscoting, and the open board/timber ceiling with trusses. Late in the historic period, the entrance and tower were offset in a manner more reminiscent of Richard Upjohn's popular rural church design. Also an inner north wall between the sanctuary and vestry room was partially removed and a large pointed arch (local brick with a worked keystone) inserted to join the two rooms into a deeper chancel. The church is the only example of nineteenth century Gothic Revival architecture in Albion. The First Presbyterian Church located on the corner of 6th and Elm was constructed in 1910 and is characteristic of the Late Gothic Revival style (1895 – 1940), which differs from earlier Gothic Revival examples in that it is a truer interpretation of the original Gothic style. The only other property that has any elements of Gothic Revival architecture in Albion is the First Baptist Church at 106 S. 4th Street (ca. 1950), which has a Gothic arched window on the front façade.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

St. John's retains many original 1842, as well as 1891 characteristics of the Gothic Revival style. The building's Gothic Revival style reflects influences of ecclesiastical architecture designed for the rural parish by both English and American builders. Pugin, a primary English proponent said that "there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety; second, that all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building." The purpose is to show "architecture has morality." He insisted that the "function of a building should be expressed in its appearance" (Stanton). The building was to be the embodiment, within and without, of sacredness and faith.

Pugin also valued "simplicity, integrity, and careful use of ornament," (Patrick) concepts which found more expression in rural churches than in the highly stylized urban parishes such as New York City. He added, "People may be as fantastic as they please in their dwelling, but in the Church of God, they have no right to show off their follies..." (Hamlin).

Early identifying features of the style included "the steeply pitched roof, cross-gabled, decorated verge boards, pointed-arch windows, sometimes stained glass.... a Gothic window above [the] entry, one-story porch with flattened Gothic arches" ("Gothic Revival Architecture"). Other elements were "lofty towers, open timber roofs, "...buttressed walls, lancet side windows, and a tracery east window, often in a 'Y'" (Thurlby). The "most common identifiable feature...is the pointed arch, used for windows, doors, and decorative elements..." ("Mid-19th Century Period").

St. John's was built just as the English parish ecclesiastical style for Episcopal mission churches became standard. But the hundreds of "Commissioners' churches built in England in 1817 and 1837 provided an early template for a modified rural Gothic. St. John's reflects these plain churches that "were simple rectangular boxes, lacking transepts or [set back] chancels, and had galleries inside. Nearly all had a axial 'western' tower, spire, cupola or bell turret, and ...for cheapness, they were mostly brick." Plus they often used an open timber roof (Thurlby). Also part of this model is "a central aisle [that] oriented the nave toward the altar. The nave, choir, and apse were covered by a lofty, steeply pitched roof, and usually framed with open trusses" (Patrick).

"In the 1840s mature Gothic revivalism appeared in American Church architecture largely because the...Camden Society...had resolved to do what it could to influence the design of churches outside the British Isles...By the time that the Cambridge Camden Society had resolved to expand its activities to include what it quaintly terms, 'the Colonies,' it had also decided to recommend the English parish church as the model for revival.... The parish church revival

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

was...limited to ecclesiastical building, and even within that narrow category it was the property of a single denomination (Stanton). The Episcopal Church is that "single denomination."

Within the church, a central aisle oriented the nave toward the altar, usually placed in an apse.... This focusing of the interior space on the altar, visually remote and ...differentiated from the nave...expressed the new piety of the Oxford Tractarians, who wished to recover a medieval sense of reverence and awe for both the sacraments...and the...place. The nave, choir, and apse were covered by a lofty, steeply pitched roof, and usually framed with open trusses (Patrick).

Although some of the early Gothic structures in America were ornate, extensive buildings, Hamlin argues that the "best of American Gothic work remains in its simpler, its less ostentatious, monuments; the little church in which wood was allowed frankly to be itself...which Upjohn designed for country villages and distant mission stations."

The Gothic Revival style naturally began on the east coast with increasing examples in the mission regions in the South and Middle West (east of the Mississippi) creating a common image in Episcopal rural parishes. One example was the Chapel of the Holy Innocents in Burlington, NJ (1845-46), which..."resembles the designs of the Gothic revival architects of the English generation of the 1840s. It is an unpretentious, rectangular chamber.... The longitudinal axis runs north-south; the altar is at the north end. A pair of low steps raised the height of the sanctuary, and within it the altar stands upon a footpace.... The interior woodwork was painted dark brown, and the timber elements of the open timbered and arch-braced roof were stained..." (Stanton). Regionally, Kentucky had modified or simplified Gothic country churches. In Illinois, pioneer churches, Trinity in Jacksonville, IL and St. Peter's in Grand Detour, showed distinct Gothic characteristics.

The Camden Society "in November 1841...began publishing *The Ecclesiologist* to spread the word. They even succeeded in dictating the design of one American church, St. James the Less, in Philadelphia, erected 1846-48 to plans" provided "by an English architect and carried out by the Philadelphia architect John E. Carver" (Andrews).

Both the original construction and the later remodeling of the St. John's Episcopal Church was guided by the church's reverend, Benjamin Hutchins. He hewed first to a simple American Gothic version, and then supervised its change to the more English parish style. Under Rev. Hutchins' direction, St. John's was built to incorporate a simplified, modest structure dominated stylistically by key Gothic Revival elements: ten large pointed-arch windows with lancet tracery in the nave, a large tracery lancet window over the central entrance, a small pointed arch window in the front gable, an open gable roof (though with a less steep pitch), and a modest central bell tower with pointed arch louvers. Inside, the nave was a simple rectangular room with a central aisle dividing the pews and leading to a slightly elevated chancel area with the altar against the north interior wall. The organ and choir were over the main entrance in a shallow gallery. An attached vestry room shared the chancel wall and extended north. The nave and chancel shared the same space, separated by the single step of the chancel platform. The ceiling was timber with open truss beams. Dark wainscoting waist high along the walls matched the dark stain of the ceiling timbers. St. John's was built in four months, opened on Christmas Day, 1842, and its construction debts were paid by its consecration in June 1843. It was a simple, serviceable, modest, beautiful church.

In 1842 St. John's Gothic elements neatly fit the simple structures that were scattered from the east coast the Mississippi in the 1840s. St. John's, for instance, could easily be included in the description of the Chapel of the Holy Innocents in Burlington, NJ (1845-46), which..."resembles the designs of the Gothic revival architects of the English generation of the 1840s. It is an unpretentious, rectangular chamber.... The longitudinal axis runs north-south; the altar is at the north end. A pair of low steps raised the height of the sanctuary, and within it the altar stands upon a footpace.... The interior woodwork was painted dark brown, and the timber elements of the open timbered and arch-braced roof were stained..." (Stanton).

The structural changes in the 1880s and 1890s conform to Gothic Revival design principles in the Upjohn ecclesiastical template (while keeping or reusing many of St. John's original Gothic features). Those principles reflected a shift in Episcopal-Anglican ritual reflected in the architecture. "Richard Upjohn... was a High Church Anglican...which was a blessing for the Episcopal Church he served so splendidly." He argued that "the object is not to surprise with novelties in church architecture but to make what is to be made truly ecclesiastical—a temple of solemnities—such as will fix the attention of persons, and make them respond in heart and spirit to the opening service..." (Andrews). For the small-scale parish church, the ideal was simplified to "typically ...a tower, often asymmetrically placed, a spire... lancet groups as triplets or couplets in the façade and apse, and wooden tracery imitating the complexities of the English

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

decorated style" (Patrick). "The timber elements of the open timbered and arch-braced roof were stained..." (Stanton). "Among such features would be a deep chancel, often housing a choir, where the celebrant and the altar would be somewhat removed from the congregation; aisles for a ceremonial approach to the altar through a long, narrow nave, an interior with 'dim religious light' and intense colours meant to transport the mind...." (www.junipercivic.com)

Hutchins was seminary educated, traveled to his native Philadelphia (a center for Episcopal and architectural ideas) for temporary residence repeatedly, and shipped books from the east to his Albion bookshop. From the earliest days in Albion, books had been sent "by individuals in England, as a nucleus for a public library" and stored in the market-house (Flower) where Hutchins held Episcopal services in 1841. There were multiple reasons he was doubtless aware of the growing use of specific American ecclesiastical designs for mission churches, especially those by Richard Upjohn. The original St. John's structure differed from the classic Upjohn plan in several ways: its entrance was central rather than offset, its chancel shared the space of the nave; it had a modest belfry rather than a bell tower; its choir was located in the back gallery rather than in the front near or in the chancel, and there were no narrow lancet windows.

In 1854 Rev. Benjamin Hutchins and Henry J. Hutchins (a vestryman and his father) wrote a joint letter recommending a new roof, a rearrangement of the pews into the chancel space, and the removal of the inner north wall to open the vestry space for a new chancel. They also suggested lowering the gallery or raising the floor (either of which would have required the central entrance to be remodeled). This would have created the "deep chancel" and moved the choir into the forward space between the congregation and the altar. There were no funds, however. The small sacristy added about 1880 extended from the enclosed vestry room. Its style is similar, for instance, to the original vestry on the historic St. James the Less, in Philadelphia (1855).

When the more extensive modifications were made in the 1890s, the changes all fell within the Upjohn parish model. St. John's added an asymmetrical, substantial bell tower incorporating the base into a narthex/vestibule. The vestry room wall was removed and replaced by a brick Gothic arch so the chancel was "deeper" into the old vestry space. Triplet narrow lancet windows were added to the south and north ends. Colored glass replaced the small clear glazes in the nave windows. The choir was moved to the space between the congregation and altar. In short, the modifications in 1890 shifted St. John's from the simpler "prairie" Gothic closer to the English parish church style.

Also St. John's is a representative structure resulting from the Episcopal missionary movement into the Middle Western frontier in the 1840s. The Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity and the Missionary Board of the Episcopal Church planted parishes in the "west" as defined by about 100 miles west of Philadelphia to Missouri. The first Episcopal Bishop, William White and the first Missionary Bishop, Jackson Kemper, were formative figures in Benjamin Hutchins' personal and religious life. Philander Chase, First Bishop of Ohio and of Illinois was also an important influence. (When traveling in England to raise money for what became Kenyon College in Ohio, Chase became a supporter of the Gothic style. Later he used it in Kenyon College's main building.)

An earlier emissary from the new Domestic Missionary Society who visited both Illinois and Indiana preceded Hutchins in the early 1820s. Benjamin Grutt, a layman from Guernsey Island in 1819, first read episcopal services in Albion. Other lay services were held in a market house on the southwest corner of the square. The following year an Episcopal missionary, Amos G. Baldwin, organized St. John's church, but it did not flourish after his departure a few weeks later. In Morris Birkbeck's Wanboro village near Albion, services were held in a log cabin built for a schoolroom. "Prayers from the services of the Church of England, with a few omissions, were read by one of the inhabitants, and a sermon by another. The services were continued each Sunday; both Quakers and Episcopalians attended. (Flower)

Bishop William White explained the general difficulties of the frontier mission field. "No society can be imagined where Episcopal services were more needed than in Indiana and Illinois at that time, and on the other hand there was none where they were less wanted." "Even for the East the supply of clergy was sadly inadequate. Funds were also lacking; the Missionary Society was in its inception, and after a moment of promise had to struggle for life against a decline of interest." Before arriving in Albion, Benjamin Hutchins had served the Pennsylvania mission field. He resided in Philadelphia between working in Episcopal parishes in Venango County (1825), Erie County, (1827); Crawford County (1827), Sugar Loaf township (late 1820s or early 1830s). He served briefly as the second rector of Christ's Church in Pensacola, FL in 1829. By 1832 the Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania employed thirteen missionaries (Journal of the General Convention, 1832). Hutchins served for two years in York County (1834-1836).

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

He and his wife, Mary, arrived in Albion in 1838, found no suitable lodgings, and returned to Vincennes, IN where their second child, a daughter, was born. He traveled once a month to Albion for services. In 1839, Hutchins started Trinity Episcopal, Fort Wayne, IN. Later in 1839, they returned to Philadelphia while he served a mission at Erie County until permanently settling in Albion in 1841. In June, 1843 Rev. Hutchins, who was under the control of the Board of Missions during his tenure, reported that the church was "a substantial brick church...erected at the cost of about \$1,500, and is entirely paid for, no debt, whatever, hanging over the building, ...and...ready for consecration since Christmas day, 1842."

Bishop Philander Chase, Bishop of the Illinois Diocese struggled with the effects of age. In a July 10 letter he remarks "at Albion we consecrated a church and confirmed twenty-four, besides baptizing a number and preaching many times.... The trip was "one of the most laborious visitations...in the extreme parts of his diocese. The fatigue of long journeys and the great heat caused a severe illness at St. Louis on his return. After his recovery, more than nine weeks were spent in the most arduous duty of visiting his scattered people over the vast prairie...." (Chase)

St. John's is one of few surviving structures dating to the founding generation of the Birkbeck and Flower English settlement.

Albion was established in 1818 by Englishman George Flower. Flower's wealth gave him "a commanding position" and allowed him to experiment with farming and livestock. He was instrumental in preventing the legalization of slavery in Illinois in 1823. Eventually his wealth was exhausted. (famousamericans.net) Both Flower and Birkbeck advertised the Illinois settlement through their writings. Birkbeck published *Letters from Illinois* and *Notes on a Journey from the Coast of Virginia to the Territory of Illinois in 1817 and 1818* that described the prairie in order to entice English immigrants. Flower wrote *History of the English settlement in Edwards County, Illinois*. By 1819, the two men "suffered a falling out" and remained distant; Birkbeck drowned in 1825. Flower lived until 1862. (lincoln.lib.niu.edu). George and Eliza Flower, both Anglicans, deeded the lot to the church. One historical map shows Flower owned the entire acreage of the town. (museum.state.il.us/OHIA)

The early settlers of English Prairie lived in log cabins. But brick was quickly available for chimneys and hearths, then increasingly used in the more substantial homes and business houses (market-house, tavern, courthouse, jail). Flower made a piece of England in Park House, built for his father about 1819, giving it "an appearance of the old country rather than the new" including a "handsome garden to the south...fenced in by an English hawthorn hedge. Thirty acres of the northern woodland was preserved,...and sowed with blue grass, it had the appearance of a park" (Flower).

Wood was an abundant building material in Illinois, yet brick became a common choice for larger homes and businesses. In 1841, George French arrived, bought property on the square in April, and built a two-story Georgian-style brick house the same year. The following year, F.B. Thompson built his two-story brick home beside the French residence. The construction of two substantial brick residences shares the time period with St. John's.

Hutchins' own residence, a block north of the Thompson home, was a sizeable home--two-story, local brick, open gables with wide verge boards, stone lintels and sills, and large glazed, 8 over 8 double sash windows ("Old Landmark"). Henry Hutchins, who joined his son at Albion, and lived the rest of his life there, bought the residential acreage and is likely to have funded construction in the late 1840s. Henry Hutchins' affluence apparently allowed Benjamin Hutchins to raise his family, travel several times to Philadelphia for extended stays, stock a bookstore in Albion, go for months without parish reimbursement, and stretch his modest stipend from the national missionary fund.

The use of brick and the emphasis on Gothic style in 1842 put St. John's squarely in the English mode, reinforced by the English country parish modifications in 1890.

The Architectural Evolution of St. John's Episcopal Church

Originally the church had a simple rectangular floor plan; a small room was added to the northeast elevation in 1879. The front-gabled roof was shingled. Set back from the southern edge was a white, weatherboard, square bell tower with a pointed arch louver inset in each side. Atop the tower was a simple short wooden parapet or railing surrounding a shingled conical spire whose base is about half the width of the tower. Atop the spire is a "pattee" cross. (The cross may have originally been at the gable peak.) Below the peak was a small pointed, double-sash (9 over 6) window with a tracery arch. The entrance was directly below this window. The front stoop was a small concrete slab with two boot

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

scrapers set into each side. The east and west exterior walls each had five double hung (15 over 15) windows with frosted glazes. A top each was a lancet arch of 15 pointed glazes in tracery molding.

The vestry room extended under the north gable and has a slightly steeper pitch. It shared an interior wall with the main building. In 1842 the vestry had a single east window, single north doorway, and single west window. The pointed window that had been in the front gable was reused in the west wall of the new narthex. The large lancet arch that had covered the original front door was reused over the open doorway from the narthex into the back of the nave. The cross atop the south gable was moved to the spire of the new bell tower.

Entering the nave, on either side of the door and against the south wall were bookshelves housing the Sunday school library. Above the doorway in 1842 was a narrow gallery entered by a plain stairway attached to the east wall. This gallery extended the length of the south wall and was used for the choir and the pump organ. The wide center aisle divides two rows of pews. On the chancel ledge on the north end of the nave was a pulpit on the left and a lectern on the right (both of walnut), along with the baptismal font. The communion table/altar was in the center of the north wall. The vestry room for the priest's books, records, and vestments, was accessed from the chancel through a doorway. (Rev. Hutchins wore a white robe until just before the sermon when he entered the vestry room and returned in a black robe for preaching.)

The record is unclear whether the timber trusses and ceiling were hidden in 1842. Because of the difficulty of heating the open nave, there may have been a temporary cover for a time. Occasionally during harsh winter weather, the congregation held meetings or services in a rectory or the small vestry room since both were easier to heat. A small brick chimney exited the northeast corner of the roof. Candles provided lighting for evening services.

St. John's retained its original form for about forty years. Funds were insufficient; Rev. Hutchins' pay was delayed along with building repairs several times. In 1854 Rev. Hutchins and Henry J. Hutchins (a vestryman and his father) wrote a joint letter recommending a new roof, a rearrangement of the pews into the chancel area, the removal of the inner north wall to open the vestry space for a larger, deeper chancel. They also suggested lowering the gallery or raising the floor (either of which would have required the central entrance to be remodeled). Lack of funds prevented changes. The roof may have been replaced in 1857. Minor changes involved the installation of three large chandeliers of bronze-like metal suspended from the ceiling; each holding five or six oil lamps that matched wall sconces. These were later replaced with acetylene lighting.

According to one record, about 1880 the small addition was attached on the northeast side (the current sacristy). It was attached at the intersection of the nave and vestry, with a door into the vestry. (Whether this was originally a second exterior entrance to the vestry or was cut out for the addition is not known.) Thus the vestry gained an addition, but the nave did not. The organ was shifted from the gallery to the east side of the chancel and the choir moved to the nearby pews. The gallery became extra seating and Sunday school classrooms. These changes accomplished part of the Hutchins' 1854 suggestions and were preparatory to extensive work.

The primary alterations to the 1842 building came in October 1890 and further incorporated the suggestions offered 36 years before. At age 86, Rev. Hutchins was retired but retained *emeritus* status and was still active in the community. A new roof and new floor were installed. The ceiling was "opened" to reveal the "beautiful beams of the vaulted roof." The small glazes of each of the large nave windows were replaced with larger panes of colored glass and the lancet tracery of each was reduced to the outer 7 pieces with frosted pane in the center portion of the inner arch. The gallery and its stairway were removed.

The inner north wall between the original vestry room and chancel was partially removed and a reinforcing brick arch with compound pillars and a worked keystone was inserted. The old vestry space became the new chancel with three lancet windows replacing the door in the north wall, and a single pointed window in the east and west chancel walls. Parishioners did the entire massive arch, the stone cutting, and surface work of the keystone. "In fact, the church membership included many skilled craftsmen, who had a hand in the work...."

The original belfry was removed along with the center entrance. Three lancet windows filled the south wall and a substantial bell tower with the vestibule/narthex in its base was added to the southwest corner. One source says, "The walls of the building were unaltered except for the three lancet windows built into the front and back walls and the rose window into the front gable." This omits the loss of the one large nave window which had to be removed for the new tower.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

The original doors were reused in the new entry and shielded from the weather by an open pointed arch porch. The pointed window that had been in the front gable was reused in the west wall of the new narthex. The large lancet arch that had covered the original front door was reused over the open doorway from the narthex into the back of the nave. The cross atop the south gable was moved to the spire of the new bell tower.

The first service in the reworked building was New Year's Day, 1891. The following March, the Rev. Benjamin Hutchins died from complications from a fall he suffered on his 55th wedding anniversary. He "spared not himself, spending and being spent in the care of the Church." A large Celtic cross marks Benjamin Hutchins' grave in the Albion cemetery, but it is abundantly evident that St. John's is his true monument.

Conclusion

St. John's Episcopal Church has operated as a mission parish for 169 years and is believed to be the oldest Episcopal Church building in Illinois. It has characteristics of two Gothic Revival phases: the original 1842 characteristics of the Prairie Gothic Revival style and the 1890 remodeling, which conforms to Gothic Revival design principles in the Upjohn ecclesiastical template. Upjohn's ecclesiastical model for Episcopal rural parishes was widely applied during the time period. In addition to being the only example of nineteenth century Gothic Revival in Albion, it is also one of few existing structures dating to the founding generation of the English Settlement established by Morris Birkbeck and George Flower in 1818.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

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St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

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"William White (Bishop of Pennsylvania)" <http://en.wikipedia.org> 17 January 2011. [Referenced article]

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: **St. John's Episcopal Church, Albion, IL**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 407605 4248031
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

The lot historically associated with St. John's Episcopal Church.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Puckett

organization St. John's Episcopal Church

date _____

street & number 408 E. Court St.

telephone (618) 842-5001

city or town Fairfield

state IL

zip code 62837

e-mail bluecrane9@frontier.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: St. John's Episcopal Church

City or Vicinity: Albion

County: Edwards

State: Illinois

Photographer: Judith Puckett

Date Photographed: December, 2010; January, 2011; May, 2011

All digital images currently stored on photographer's external hard drive.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo #1: West portion of south façade; camera facing north.

Photo #2: Main entrance with porch, south end; camera facing north.

Photo #3: West half of south façade; camera facing north.

Photo #4: Upper west portion of south façade showing tower; camera facing northwest.

Photo #5: South façade, main wall; camera facing west.

Photo #6: South façade; camera facing west.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

Photo #7: Detail of top of south façade; camera facing north.
Photo #8: South half of east façade; camera facing west.
Photo #9: Detail of field stone foundation on east wall; camera facing west.
Photo #10: Detail of exterior sill, east façade; camera facing west.
Photo #11: Exterior detail of east nave window; camera facing west.
Photo #12: Exterior junction of nave and sacristy addition on east façade; camera facing northwest.
Photo #13: Detail of exterior junction of nave and sacristy on east; camera facing north.
Photo #14: South sacristy window; camera facing north.
Photo #15: North façade and back door of sacristy; camera facing south.
Photo #16: Exterior roof junction of nave and chancel; camera facing southwest.
Photo #17: East and north facades; camera facing southwest.
Photo #18: North façade of chancel (original vestry room); camera facing south.
Photo #19: North and west façade, tower, and north portion of parish hall; camera facing south.
Photo #20: West façade of chancel (original vestry room); camera facing east.
Photo #21: Exterior junction of west nave wall, north tower base, and south parish hall; camera facing south.
Photo #22: North and west exterior of parish hall; camera facing southeast.
Photo #23: West and south facades of parish hall, west base of tower and porch; camera facing northeast.
Photo #24: West brick tower façade and partial south façade; camera facing east.
Photo #25: West and south upper tower façade; camera facing northeast.
Photo #26: Exterior tower detail, north side; camera facing south.
Photo #27: South and west facades; camera facing northeast.
Photo #28: Interior narthex through original door tracery to east interior; camera facing east.
Photo #29: Furnace closet in narthex/foyer; camera facing northwest.
Photo #30: Interior of main entrance from within narthex; camera facing south.
Photo #31: Narthex and reset original door tracery and window taken from south end of nave; camera facing west.
Photo #32: Nave and chancel; camera facing north.
Photo #33: Southeast corner of nave; camera facing southeast.
Photo #34: West half of nave; camera facing northwest.
Photo #35: East half of nave; camera facing northeast.
Photo #36: Early choir pew; camera facing north.
Photo #37: East nave window; camera facing east.
Photo #38: Detail of tracery in east nave window; camera facing east.
Photo #39: Ceiling detail; camera facing south.
Photo #40: Chancel; camera facing north.
Photo #41: Detail of compound arch, west leg; camera facing northwest.
Photo #42: Chancel (vestry) and nave ceiling and trusses; camera facing south.
Photo #43: Interior portion of original pre-arch vestry wall (smoke-stained) now in chancel; camera facing south.
Photo #44: Chancel detail; camera facing north.
Photo #45: Nave and south wall from chancel area; camera facing south.
Photo #46: East side of nave and south wall (site of original door and balcony); camera facing south.
Photo #47: Sacristy from chancel doorway; camera facing east.
Photo #48: Sacristy (back) door; camera facing north.
Photo #49: Southeast corner sacristy; camera facing southeast.
Photo #50: Southwest portion of parish hall; camera facing west.
Photo #51: Northwest portion of parish hall; camera facing north.
Photo #52: Northeast portion of parish hall; camera facing north.
Photo #53: Southeast portion of parish hall (with connecting door to narthex); camera facing southeast.
Photo #54: Parish hall bathroom; camera facing west.
Photo #55: Parish hall utility closet in bathroom; camera facing west.

Supplemental Historical Images (A-J)

Photo A: St. John's Episcopal, circa 1880--original south façade, bell tower, multi-pane windows.
Photo B: Original entrance showing double doors, tracery, and upper window reset in current narthex; stairway to original balcony visible in multi-paned nave window.
Photo C: South façade detail showing panels of doors.
Photo D: 1890 south façade and tower with original glass in round window.

St. John's Episcopal Church
Name of Property

Edwards, IL
County and State

Photo E: Circa 1890 interior showing new chancel incorporating old vestry by removing portion of dividing wall and inserting large supporting arch.

Photo F: Circa 1890 interior showing new choir area and chancel with brick arch opening old vestry into chancel.

Photo G: South façade circa 1920s showing original glass in round window is replaced with solid board.

Photo H: Rev. Benjamin Hutchins, missionary and long-time rector of St. John's.

Photo I: Rev. Benjamin Hutchins.

Photo J: Rev. Benjamin Hutchins' home in Albion, IL.

Property Owner:

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name St John's Episcopal Church

street & number 20 E. Cherry Street

telephone _____

city or town Albion

state IL

zip code 62806

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.







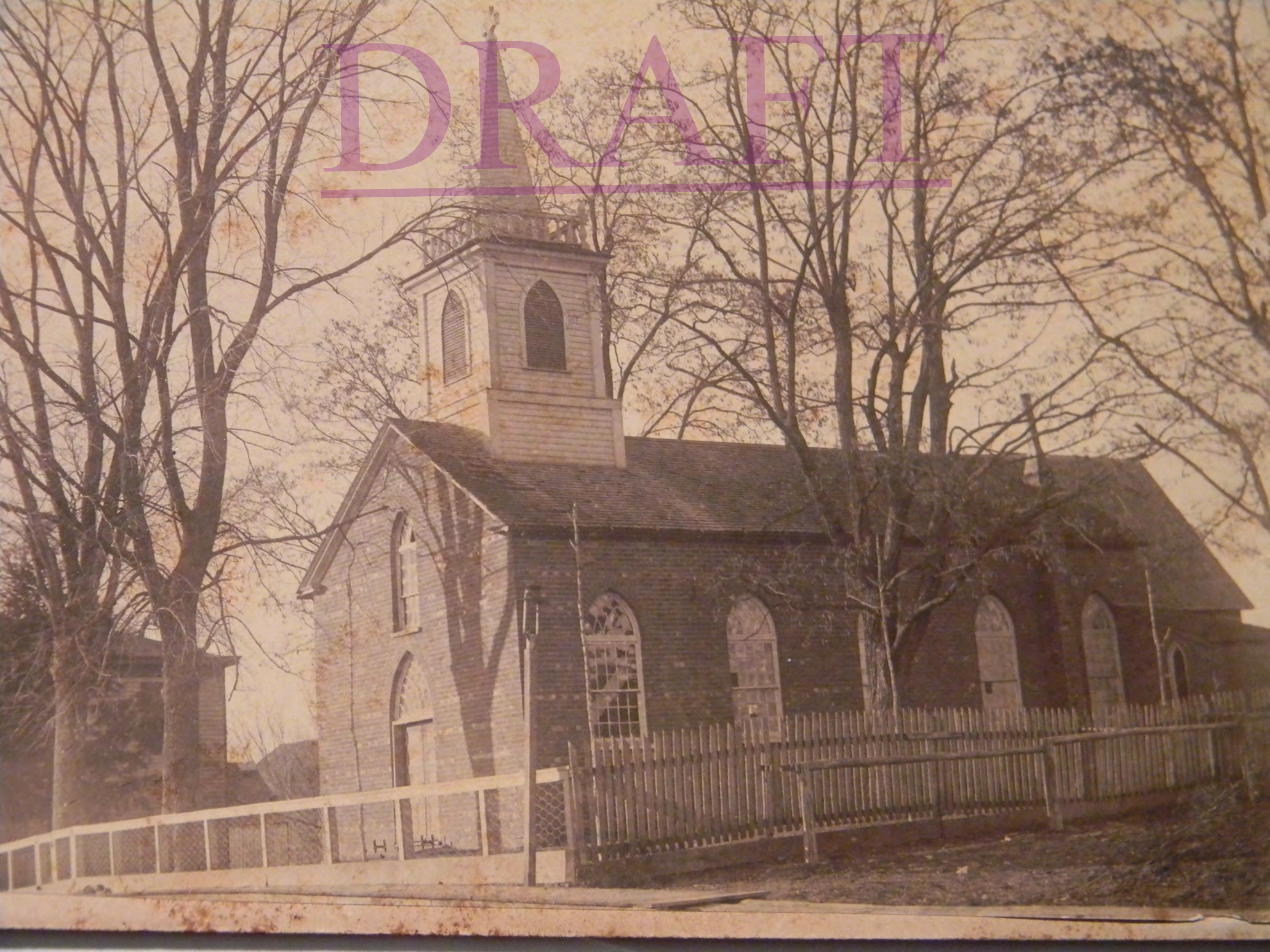


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